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HOWARD W. SMITH, President and
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WILLIAM ALBERT SHOOT, Vice
President
EDWIN BRADLEY HARD, Editor and
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CONFIDENT OF VICTORY.

General A. de Ceuninck, the distinguished soldier and minister of war for Belgium, yesterday expressed to a correspondent the firm conviction that a great offensive by the Germans on the western front would be the beginning of the end for the Prussian military machine. This is true, said the general, because even if the enemy should put his entire strength into an assault it was doomed to certain failure in view of allied preparedness. Having defeated the Germans in their onslaught, the allies would be in a position, through the balance of power which America had brought them, to counter with irresistible force.

The minister had been asked to discuss the military situation as it appeared in the light of Germany's present position, and the Prussian claim that the entente allies would be brought to their knees.

The general turned to the outlook for the allied arms on the battlefield. "We do not underrate the strength of our opponents," he said. "Germany is a military nation, and she is not yet defeated. America, however, has brought into the conflict the additional resources necessary to tip the balance in our favor, and an allied victory is assured. The outcome of the war now hinges on the question of numbers, and the superiority rests with us."

"Germany will fail in any offensive which she may be preparing for on the western front. The allies are ready for any move and will present an unbreakable line. If the enemy is going to stake everything on a big attack and is calling out every resource he can command, he will have reached the beginning of the end when he fails to break through, for the counter strokes of the allies can result in only one thing—defeat for Germany. It may take some time to put the finishing touches on the victory, but this will be accomplished."

BAN ON EXPLOSIVES.

While the movement, started many years ago, of eliminating the explosive feature in the celebration of Fourth of July and Christmas has grown considerably up to the time the United States was compelled to take up arms against Germany in self-defense, the advent of Uncle Sam into the arena has greatly accelerated the safe and sound celebration of these holidays.

Alexandria was among the first of the cities of the country to place a ban upon ear-splitting noises on such occasions, and while it was impossible to obliterate the custom immediately, the practice has greatly subsided in late years.

Some places have commenced early to impress upon people the uselessness of explosives on certain holidays and to reproduce old laws, long more honored in their breach than observance, which forbid the discharge of firearms of any kind on the sale or use of explosives.

State Fire Marshal Alfred T. Fleming announced yesterday in Columbus, Ohio, that he will issue an order later this year absolutely prohibiting the use of fireworks in Ohio this Fourth of July. The announcement was made in conjunction with the beginning of a campaign against fireworks as a waste of money and powders that could be used in the prosecution of the war. The State Fire Marshal said he was starting his campaign at this time so that dealers would not purchase fireworks.

ANOTHER PEACE PLAN.

According to the London Morning Post's Berlin correspondent, preparations are being made through the German newspapers and German press agents for a new political move.

The correspondent says it is possible a fresh peace move is contemplated on the basis of the status quo prior to the war in the west and recognition of the present status in the east.

"As usual it will be timed to follow a German victory." And, it will put forth a victor's terms, according to indications. It will make an appeal to that group which believes Russia should be left to her own fate.

The new proffer will probably get a stonier hearing than any proposal to date.

Entente diplomats say allied determination is stiffer than ever before, and that the war spirit is growing fast upon this country. The picture of plundered Russia, of game but helpless Roumania, of Armenia, blood-soaked and pledged by Germany to the Turk, of devastated Belgium and France are now defeating peace proposals. There is no fear that a made-in-Germany peace will stick at this time.

NEEDS OF DEPARTMENT

Chief Ogden's Recommendations to Committee of City Council of Changes Deemed Necessary for Fire Department.

The letter of recommendations, written by Chief Kenneth W. Ogden to the committee of the City Council relative to the needs of the fire department of Alexandria, is given space herewith for the benefit of the citizens in general:

Mr. William Desmond, Chairman, Fire Committee, City Council, Alexandria, Va.

Dear Sir: I think that I would be derelict in my duty should I refrain longer from again recommending the purchase of a modern aerial ladder truck, motor driven. When I use the word "duty" I do so with full cognizance of the word. The need of this apparatus is now extremely urgent, the present truck having outlived not only its usefulness, but has passed the stage of safety. When responding to a fire the apparatus sways from side to side, slinging itself against the car tracks one minute and swerving in an opposite direction next, and it will be no surprise to me should it literally fall to pieces. The ladders are rotten and positively unsafe, and I must say to you, regardless of the consequences, that I cannot take the responsibility of placing the extension ladder in service even though the saving of a life of a person who may be trapped on the top floor of a tall building should be involved. The rounds of this particular ladder are all loose, rails dented and rotten, and the chains so rusty that I can say, without fear of successful contradiction, it will not support the weight of the extension. The lives of the men in the department are worth more than the risk, and there are too many homes that could be plunged into sorrow should this ladder be put into use and break, carrying with it four or five men, which is, at least, the minimum number to be placed thereon at time of a fire. The shorter ladders, or, at least the most of them, are more or less in bad condition and dangerous, to say nothing of their excessive weight. I want to call your attention to the fact that where these ladders are broken they have been pieced with iron stringers, and such a piece of apparatus is disgraceful to our department; furthermore, even in the event that the extension ladder was safe, its length is entirely inadequate to reach certain of our buildings wherein a fire may start at any time. The city service truck affords a ladder no longer than our present one; therefore, such a truck is equally inadequate and our solution lies only in an aerial truck. These facts, prior to my election as chief of the department, were stated to the best of my ability, but without avail, and I cannot, should this thing continue, help putting it squarely up to every member of council, and if there is any responsibility, it must be shouldered by those gentlemen as individuals and thereby relieve me of the burden. I think, no doubt, that a truck will cost more now than it would have three months ago, and have fixed the figure at \$12,000.00, and the longer we delay its purchase the greater the cost will be.

I further recommend that our entire Department be motorized and tractorized, and that the following changes in our equipment be made in addition to the purchase of the aerial truck: two (2) combination, motor driven, hose wagons at a cost of about \$5,000.00 each, one (1) tractor for the Columbia Engine at a cost of about \$5,000.00. Place the present Reliance Engine in reserve and purchase a new third size Metropolitan steamer, tractorized at a cost of about \$8,200.00, one reserve fuel and hose car at a cost of about \$2,500.00.

The total cost of these improvements will aggregate \$37,700.00. We have eight horses in the Department, ordinarily; now we only have seven, the other being a borrowed one, as we have tried for several months to obtain a team but without success, so far. Records will show that the upkeep of these horses, including feed, shoeing, medicine, etc., aggregates over \$200.00 every month or \$2,400.00 a year; this represents a 6 per cent investment on \$40,000.00 which must be disbursed every year with the anticipation of increased cost yearly. The life of a fire horse has been from six to seven

years and with the additional work, made necessary by the proposed increase in our city's population, this will be reduced to about five years; hence, \$2,400.00 worth of horse flesh must be purchased every five years. The life of a motor apparatus should, under ordinary circumstances, be at least 15 or 20 years, and inasmuch as the total cost of the new equipment is far less than our present investments, I respectfully recommend that the old reserve steamer, the two horse drawn hose wagons, the present truck and the seven horses be disposed of, upon which we may realize a total income of about \$3,000.00 to \$3,500.00 and substitute the above named apparatus which the records will prove is far superior to the horse-drawn apparatus in the saving of time, wear and tear and maintenance.

I submit these matters to you for your earnest consideration from a standpoint of investment, as compared to our present system and efficiency.

I have no doubt but that any company supplying this equipment to the city will agree to accept the sum of \$5,000.00 per year, with the deferred payments bearing interest at the rate of 5 per cent, and that at the end of six and one-half years the total expenditure will have been absorbed.

Please bear in mind that at the end of the six-year period that we would in all probability have to purchase horses again—at least, that ratio of time, a cost of about \$2,400.00, and this item can be saved in addition to their maintenance at the rate of \$2,400.00 a year, or \$14,400.00 for the six years, which in itself is a little less than one-half of the proposed cost of the new equipment.

In conclusion, I take the liberty of making two other recommendations; namely, a modern telegraph fire alarm system and the co-operation of the Council and the Alexandria Water Company to enlarge its mains on the streets, which are about to be improved by the city, and thereby obviate the necessity of damaging those streets later for that purpose and at the same time insure better fire protection to the existing and future buildings and industries.

Respectfully submitted,
KENNETH W. OGDEN,
Chief Engineer.

ORGANIZATION IMPORTANT.

United States Department of Agriculture Urges Co-operation Among Farmers to Increase Food Production.

Washington, March 14.—In the campaign to make the 1918 food production in the southern States sufficient to feed the South, the United States Department of Agriculture recommends that co-operation among farmers and among farmers' organizations and business men be stimulated.

In every county where there is no organization, the department says, the people should be urged to perfect a

representative county body for agricultural purposes. This county organization should consist, if possible, of representatives from community organizations and should meet regularly with the county agent, and definitely work with him in the interest of general food production and conservation. They should act under the leadership of the county agent and through the county and community organizations in the effort to maintain production, to preserve the interests of farmers, and to safeguard seeds, breeding stock, etc.

The department says it is a patriotic necessity that financing of farmers, especially definite financing for food production, should be done at the lowest possible rates of interest.

CYCLONE IN AUSTRALIA.

Casualties Heavy, But No Estimates Yet Available.

Vancouver, B. C., March 14.—Several Queensland, Australia, villages were destroyed by a cyclone Monday, according to a cable received from Sydney, N. S., today by the Vancouver World. The casualties were reported heavy. The cable said:

"A cyclone swept through North Queensland Monday, the greatest force being felt in the townships of Babinga, Herberton, Mount Garnet, Cardwell and Cairns."

"The suffering caused by the wind was particularly severe at Babinga, where a number of villages were practically destroyed, houses and barns being toppled over and rolled long distances."

"The casualties are reported to be heavy, but no correct estimate of the killed or injured will be available for several days owing to the dislocation of the telephone and telegraph systems."

Plant a Victory Garden this Spring.

AN OLD RECORD.

Is Edgar Allen Poe Indebted to the University of Virginia?

Charlottesville, Va., March 14.—Is Edgar Allen Poe indebted to the University of Virginia, or is the University indebted to Poe? As an academic question this might be hard to answer, but if considered on a financial basis, Poe owes the University a total of two cents at present.

This discovery was made several days ago when numerous old papers, yellowed and disintegrating from age, were found far beneath the ground in the unused cellars of the Rotunda. Among the packages of ancient records was one file of library fines. On this file was charged a fine of sixty cents against Edgar Allen Poe for keeping certain volumes of history overtime. Further down the worn and stained columns was a note that fifty-eight cents had been received from Poe. The payment of the other two cents has not been found anywhere.

CARS FALL OVERBOARD

Fourteen Loaded Ones Slip Off From Barge Crossing Chesapeake Bay.

Norfolk, Va., March 14.—Officials of the New York, Philadelphia and Northern Railroad here are today investigating the cause of the loss of fourteen freight cars loaded with lumber from New York, Philadelphia and Northern barge No. 2, last Sunday night. The barge was in tow of one of the company's big tugs, and was crossing Chesapeake Bay from Cape Charles when the cars slipped overboard. It is said that no one on the barge was hurt. This is the first accident of the kind that has ever happened in Chesapeake Bay, although the New York, Philadelphia and Northern has been towing its barges from Cape Charles to Port Norfolk for more than twenty years.

Plant a Victory Garden this Spring.

FEDERAL PAY BILL HALTED.

Would Raise Government Employees With Some Exceptions.

Efforts to add an amendment to the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Appropriation bill, providing for an increase of salaries of Government employees, prevented passage of the measure yesterday in the House. The amendment would increase \$10 a month the salaries of all employees receiving between \$480 and \$2,000, exclusive of those in the postal or Panama Canal service or who give only a part of their time to the Government. An increase for postal employees is provided in another bill.

Leaders had hoped to pass the bill last night and clean the way for work on the War Finance Corporation and the Railroad bill. Debate on the legislative measure continued today.

HAD MAPS AND PICTURES.

Austrian Confesses He's Beneficiary of Hun Bribery.

Jersey City, March 14.—Victor Soboleski, an Austrian, was held in \$10,000 bail here yesterday following his arraignment in criminal court, after an examination of his effects disclosed, according to the police, that he had in his possession numerous railroad maps, drawings of submarine craft and torpedo tubes and photographs of factories in New Jersey. Soboleski admitted, the police said, that he had at one time been in jail in Siberia, but escaped after \$2,000 had been furnished by a German.

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Buy your onion sets now. The supply is limited. Elbert. 62-2t.

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FOR SALE—One five-ton truck body; one three-ton truck body. These bodies will be delivered in Alexandria, Va. Have no use for them will sell them cheap. Central Garage, Manassas, Va. 61-4t.

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FOR SALE—Lunch room and rooming house. Inquire at 300 North Patrick street. 63-3t.

WANTED—A competent maid to stay nights. Apply at 700 Prince street. 63-2t.

WANTED—Boy 16 or 17 years old for general work around office. Call at office of Briggs Aeroplane Company, city. 62-3c.

WANTED—Electric elevator operator; colored; thoroughly experienced. Call at Julius Garfinkle & Co., 527 13th street, Washington, D. C. 62-3c.

WANTED—Agents for fine industrial debits. Men who can deliver the goods. None others need apply. See Mr. Burkett, 111 South Royal St., 5:30 any afternoon. Life Insurance Company of Virginia. 60-tf.

FOR SALE—A 1915 Chevrolet automobile, in first class condition. Good bargain to quick purchaser. Inquire of Mt. Vernon Auto Co., Alexandria, Va. 307-tf.

WANTED—A girl for housecleaning. Apply at 532 King street, city. 62-3c.

OLD FALSE TEETH WANTED—Don't matter if broken. I pay \$2 to \$15 per set. Also cash for old gold, silver, and broken jewelry. Send by parcel post and receive check by return mail. Will hold goods 10 days for senders approval of my offer. L. Mazer-2007 south 6th street, Phila., Pa.

WANTED—Young ladies between ages of 18 and 25. Positions as telephone operators. Apply 105 N. Alfred Street. 55-3t.

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